

To

Date 21/11/2025

Dept. Planning

Ref 25/00262/FUL

From Environmental Protection

Planning Consultation Response

Proposed demolition of existing workshop, lean to shed and picking line enclosure, and the erection of 2 no buildings to provide for the storage, sorting and processing of waste materials together with a new welfare block, weighbridge office and ancillary infrastructure including water tanks, weighbridges, revised vehicle parking, drainage improvements and odour control plant & equipment and stack at Widnes Skip And Reclaim Ditton Road Widnes Cheshire WA8 0PA

Comments

In order to understand WSRs current proposal and the possible implications for the borough in relation to offsite emissions, particularly in relation to odour, a site visit was undertaken on 23rd October 2025. Members of the Council's Environmental Protection and Regeneration departments met with management representatives from Beauparc who operate WSR Widnes.

Currently WSR Widnes receives residual (black bin) waste from both Halton and Warrington Councils, with refuse vehicles entering the facility directly to deposit the waste that has been collected from the kerbside that day. In addition to this the facility does receive waste from other smaller clients. The Majority of this waste is then shredded and taken by road to the Viridor Energy from Waste plant in Runcorn and other facilities as required. It was also noted that this facility also accepts some clinical waste.

WSR Widnes operates under an Environmental Permit Issued by the Environment Agency, reference SP3594CM. This permit currently allows WSR to receive and process up to 450'000 tons of waste per annum. There are no plans to increase the amount of waste the site handles as a result of the current application.

It is a key requirement of the permit that waste is not stored on site for longer than 72 hours. However, given that residual waste can be up to 14 days old when it is collected during kerbside collections, there is potential for waste to already be odorous as it is initially received on site.

From March 2026 all Local Authorities are required to have introduced a dedicated food waste collection service for residents. This will have the effect of altering the composition of the waste received at the WSR site, as food waste is putrescible and odorous, whereas many other typical components of residual household waste are not. To what extent this change is borne out however will very much depend on the level of public participation in the food waste collection service offered by their respective councils. Given this upcoming change, WSR wish to upgrade their site and in particular their ability to process and store waste in an indoor and controlled environment.

Odour Control Abatement System

Of particular note is that the plans include the provision of an odour control abatement system, of which the core components is a 20m tall stack and filtration system, enabling the air from inside the material recovery facility to be changed in a controlled manner, so as to prevent odours being emitted from site.

However within both the planning statement and the Odour Project Technical note supplied in support of the application, it is stated that this aspect of the development would only be implemented if it were deemed necessary, though it is not detailed how the decision to implement this system would be made, or who would be involved in these decisions. It is important to highlight that as this site is regulated by the Environment Agency and not Halton Borough Council it would be unlikely that the council would be involved in this decision.

In order to understand how significant an issue odour from WSR presents to the borough, a Freedom of Information request was made to the Environment Agency for numbers of complaints received from 2015 to date. In total 216 complaints were received, which are broken down as follows.

Year	Odour Complaints	Other Complaints
2015	4	2
2016	2	0
2017	6	1
2018	8	3
2019	64	2
2020	30	0
2021	39	0
2022	36	0
2023	3	1
2024	13	1
2025	0	1

It can be seen that complaints about odours were by far the most commonly reported issue to The Environment Agency. Complaints about other matters were issues such as litter noted offsite.

Whilst no complaints have been made to the Environment Agency so far this year in relation to odours, the council is aware of comments & discussions on social media by residents in relation to this issue.

Given the high levels of complaints in relation to odour, it is well justified to request that the odour control abatement system be constructed and be fully implemented prior to commencement of the operation of any of the newly proposed facilities.

Offsite emissions management

Currently the main method of controlling emissions from the WSR site, which is principally odours, is by means of a demisting system. This is a two-stage system. Inside the existing main waste reception building, there is an odour neutralising system which acts to contain odours within the building itself, whereas externally an odouriser system acts to mask any odours which are notable outside of the building.

The Emissions Management Plan submitted in support of the application, reference 243287, dated April 2025 & produced by AA Environmental Limited discusses general on-site arrangements for the control of odours and other potential emissions such as dust. Section 6.2 of this document details the actions to be taken in the event of off-site emissions being noted and section 6.3 discusses how 'These systems will be implemented in agreement with the Local Authority and the Environment Agency'. Contact has been made with Beauparc to clarify if these actions will be implemented on request of the Council, rather than just the Environment Agency.

However, the proposed Odour Control Abatement System is not mentioned within the Emissions Management Plan. As discussed, as there is a need for this system to be implemented on site, this plan will need to be amended to include the use of this system.

The Emissions Management Plan is further supplemented by an Odour Project Technical Note. This document explains that the proposed new waste transfer building 'MRF 2' will be built with the following features in order to control the release of odours;

- An airtight building able to be operated under negative pressure;
- rapid opening and shutting doors;
- use of odour neutralisers over doors; and

- no accesses on the downwind eastern façade preventing escape of fugitive odours

Once this proposed building is complete, residual waste operations will transfer to this new building to allow the current building 'MRF1' to be upgraded to include the enhanced odour control features as discussed above.

These features will need to be fully implemented on site.

The applicant has not submitted a construction phase dust management plan with their application, and so one will be required.

Noise

It is typical that any planning application which proposes new plant or equipment would include a BS4142 noise impacts assessment that assesses the likely impact of this new plant on any nearby noise sensitive areas. No such assessment has been submitted in support of this application however. Whilst it is appreciated that existing or similar machinery will be in use in the new buildings than there is in the current, we cannot simply assume that this will be the case. Therefore prior to the commencement of the operational phase, a noise impacts assessment will be required.

It would also be necessary to appropriately control the hours of construction during the redevelopment of the site.

Conclusion

Environmental Health has no objection to the application, subject to the following conditions being applied, in accordance with Policy HE7 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan, paragraph 187e of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and in the interests of residential amenity;

- Prior to first use, the proposed Odour Control Abatement System as described in section 1.1.7 of the Planning Statement shall be fully installed and implemented on site.
- Prior to first use, a revised Emissions Management plan, incorporating the use of the Odour Control Abatement System shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the local planning authority.
- The odour mitigation features of MRF1 and MRF2 as described in section 1.7 of Odour Project Technical Note reference 243287, dated April 2025 & produced by AA Environmental Limited shall be implemented in full.

- All construction activity should be restricted to the following hours;
 - Monday – Friday 07:30 to 19:00 hrs
 - Saturday 07:30 to 13:00 hrs
 - Sundays and Public Holidays Nil
- Prior to the commencement of the construction and demolition phase, the applicant shall produce a Dust Management Plan, adhering to the principles set out in ‘Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction’ published by the Institute of Air Quality Management.
- Prior to first use, a satisfactory BS4142 noise impacts assessment shall be submitted to the local planning authority.

Kind Regards,

Phillip Wilson
Environmental Health Officer